

Register results

The following action has been taken by Agriculture Dept. CONSUMER REGISTER summarized the proposal when it was announced.

On April 14, Agriculture Dept. will (1) revise its standards for quality grades of beef; (2) eliminate shape of the carcass as a quality grade factor; & (3) for the first time require a separate grading system for "yield." Both quality & yield grading would be required whenever industry requests grading.

Agriculture received 4500 comments—57% objected to all or parts of the new regulations, & 43% were in favor of all portions of the new rules.

Detail—*Federal Register*: March 12, page 11535; Sept. 11, 1974, page 32743. CONSUMER REGISTER: Nov. 15, 1974.

DES

On Feb. 27, Food & Drug Administration (FDA) reinstated its regulations on the use of the rapid growth hormone diethylstilbestrol (DES) for cattle & sheep.

In January 1973, FDA banned the use of DES in animal feeds because the hormone caused cancer in animal laboratory tests. Before that, in December 1971, the agency required a 7-day withdrawal period before the cattle & sheep were killed during which time the animals could not be fed any feed containing DES. FDA did not at that time ban the use of DES implants into an animal's ear to promote growth. FDA said small implants had not been found to produce detectable residues of DES in animal carcasses.

Then, in April 1973, FDA banned DES hormone implants because sensitive instruments detected small amounts of DES residue in beef livers.

In January 1974, the U.S. Court of Appeals decided that FDA's actions were invalid because the agency had not given manufacturers of DES a full hearing. A hearing will not take place until FDA perfects a sound method for detecting DES.

The 7-day withdrawal period during which animal feed containing DES may not be fed cattle & sheep before slaughter remains in effect. FDA says cattle should not be implanted with DES less than 120 days before slaughter & sheep should not have DES implants less than 70 days before slaughter.

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 27, page 8329; April 27, 1973, page 10485; Dec. 9, 1972, page 26307; Aug. 4, 1972, page 15747. CONSUMER REGISTER: June 1, 1973; Jan. 1, 1973; Sept. 1, 1972.

Note

Agriculture Dept., under authority in the Federal Meat Inspection Act, has modified this FDA action by requiring a 14-day withdrawal period as necessary to prevent DES contamination* of meat. Agriculture's studies have confirmed that it may take as long as 12 days to eliminate detectable levels of DES in certain animals fed DES-containing feed.

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 11, page 6323.

Carpets

On March 1, Housing & Urban Development Dept. (HUD) changed its minimum quality standards for carpets & adopted a carpet certification program for all

carpets used in Federal Housing Administration (FHA)-insured homes. (About 5% of all carpet made is used in FHA-insured homes, but HUD says manufacturers use FHA standards on a much higher percentage of their carpets than that.)

The new standards:

- Increase the amount of material required in the carpeting—generally 2 to 4 oz. (57 to 114 grams) per yard (.914 meters).
- Change certain colorfastness requirements.
- Strengthen enforcement methods by using an approved private testing firm.

HUD says earlier procedures for regulating carpets have been unsatisfactory, & that in a recent test by an independent laboratory, 66 of 100 samples of carpet picked at random failed to meet FHA's requirements.

Although the heavier carpeting is expected to cost consumers more initially, it should last longer than the lighter weight carpets.

Details—*Federal Register*: Oct. 8, 1974, page 36129. CONSUMER REGISTER: Jan. 1, 1973.

Guns

March 21 is deadline for comments on Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms' (ATF) proposal to require all firearms dealers to report the sale of 2 or more revolvers & pistols to one person within any 5 consecutive workdays. ATF agents would then investigate unusual purchases.

Purpose of the proposed regulation is to cut down the illegal movement of guns from a state with lenient or nonexistent gun control laws to a state with strict laws.

In 1973, ATF started tracing firearms seized by police in 12 metropolitan areas. The tracing showed that thousands of pistols & revolvers were bought by individuals, transported across state lines & resold illegally.

There are 155,000 licensed firearms dealers in the country. ATF would provide those dealers with forms for reporting multiple sales. Dealers would be required to mail the forms to the appropriate ATF office on the day the multiple sales occurred. Licensed gun dealers who sell to other dealers would not be covered by the regulation.

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 19, page 7098. Send comments or requests to be heard at a public hearing to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, Treasury Dept., Washington, DC 20226.

Food stamps No. 1

March 21 is deadline for comments on Agriculture Dept.'s proposal to require state agencies involved in the food stamp program to have a full-time Outreach Coordinator who would assure that all households eligible to receive food stamps are made aware of the program & how they can benefit from it if they choose to do so.

Agriculture proposes to use the Outreach Coordinator as well as other personnel to take "effective outreach action . . . to inform all low-income households, with due regard to ethnic groups, of the availability & benefits of the food stamp program, & how they may apply to participate." Advertising methods, such as radio announcements, posters, publications & information booths would be used for this purpose.

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 20, page 7455. Send comments, suggestions or objections to P. Royal Shipp, Director, Food Stamp Division, Food & Nutrition Service, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250.

Food stamps No. 2

On Jan. 10, Agriculture Dept. amended its regulations covering the eligibility of students for food stamps.

Under the new regulations, an individual is ineligible to receive food stamps if all 3 of the following conditions are present:

- He is at least 18 years old.
- He is enrolled in an institution providing post-high school education, including—but not limited to—colleges, universities, vocational & technical schools.
- He is a legally claimed tax dependent of a person who is not a member of a household eligible for food stamps for the current year.

Students who are members of a household eligible for food stamps would, of course, be eligible for stamps.

Details—*Federal Register*: Jan. 10, page 2204.

Food stamps No. 3

On Feb. 13, Agriculture Dept. rescinded its regulations of Jan. 22 that would have required certain households to pay 30% of their adjusted net monthly income for their food stamps. This means that until further notice, those households will continue to pay an average of 23% of their adjusted net monthly income for the food stamps.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 5, page 10165; Jan. 22, page 3483.

Tranquilizers

March 28 is deadline for comments on Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) proposal to place certain depressants (such as brand-named tranquilizers Valium & Librium) in Schedule 4 of the Controlled Substances Act. This means the tranquilizer prescriptions, which may now be prescribed without restriction, could be refilled only 5 times & would be valid for 6 months. After that, a doctor would have to write another prescription.

Four other similar tranquilizers would be affected by the proposed regulation. Their brand names are Delman, Serax, Clonopin & Tranxene.

DEA's responsibility is to enforce laws relating to

drugs such as narcotics, marihuana, depressants, stimulants & hallucinogenic drugs.

In 1973, DEA asked Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to evaluate Librium & Valium. In November 1974, FDA recommended that these drugs, in addition to the 4 others listed above, be put under stricter controls.

DEA says the tranquilizers are useful medicines, but some consumers have become overly dependent on them.

Details—*Federal Register*: Jan. 27, page 4016. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Office of the Administrative Law Judge, Justice Dept., 1405 Eye St. NW, Washington, DC 20537.

TV sets

March 31 is deadline for responding to Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) invitation to develop a mandatory safety standard for TV sets or to submit an existing standard designed to reduce or eliminate certain hazards associated with TV sets. CPSC says hazards are: (1) fire, (2) electric shock, (3) picture tube implosion (inward collapse of tube) & (4) mechanical or exterior hazards.

CPSC says TV sets were responsible for 12,300 injuries requiring hospital emergency room treatment during 1973—100 resulting from fires, 100 from electric shocks & 12,000 from injuries associated with mechanical failures. In addition, since May 1973, more than 144,300 TVs have been recalled for inspection or repairs as a result of mandatory defect reporting by companies.

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 28, page 8592. Send inquiries & submit proposed standards to Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207. Interested organizations may call CPSC (202-634-7700) for more specific instructions on submitting proposals for the standard.

Appliance efficiency

April 2 is deadline for comments on Commerce Dept.'s proposal to start a Voluntary Program for Appliance Efficiency.

The proposal is a result of President Ford's State of the Union Message in which he directed that a voluntary program be developed to reduce energy use of new home appliances by 20% by 1980. The President said that unless manufacturers agree to work toward this goal voluntarily, he will propose a mandatory program for appliance efficiency.

By the end of April, Commerce expects to propose an overall program (or set of individual proposed programs for each kind of appliance) to attain the energy efficiency goal by 1980, including intermediate goals.

Commerce wants to know how this program can be carried out. It is especially interested in (1) test & certification procedures, (2) methods of attaining required goals, (3) methods of measuring progress & attaining goals without requiring production data & (4) methods of verifying any required production data.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 3, page 8846; Dec. 31, 1974, page 45334; Jan. 31, 1974, page 3982. CONSUMER REGISTER: Feb. 15, 1974. CONSUMER NEWS: May 15, 1974.

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For you

These forms are for you to use, if you wish, in commenting on any Federal agency proposal summarized in CONSUMER REGISTER. Of course, if you cannot get your comments on the front & back of a form, feel free to continue your comments on additional paper.

Send comment forms to addresses listed in the summaries.

CONSUMER NEWS is publishing these forms in cooperation with Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

Rate Register

● On March 7, Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) proposed new rules that would increase airlines' liability for loss, damage or delay of passengers' baggage.

Under the new rules, CAB would:

● Raise the limit on liability for loss, damage or delay of baggage from \$500 to \$750. The present \$500 figure was set in 1966, & CAB cited inflation as justification for proposing the higher limit. Delay damages would compensate passengers for frustration & other inconveniences associated with delayed baggage delivery.

● Remove existing 45-day limit for filing loss or damage claims.

● End airlines' practice of accepting baggage for which liability could later be disclaimed because of being "unsuitable for air transportation, fragile, or unsuitably packed."

CAB's Office of the Consumer Advocate said that in 1973 it received 1,850 baggage related complaints; in 1974 it received 2,461, a 34% increase.

Consumers may comment on this proposal any time before April 21 by sending a letter to Docket Section (specify Docket No. 27591), Civil Aeronautics Board, Room 710 Universal Bldg., Washington, DC 20428.

● Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) continues its suspension of nation's railroads' proposal to increase their freight rates by 7%. [Consumer News: March 1]

Clip this form, fill in blanks, write your comments & mail to agency noted in CONSUMER REGISTER item.

This is my opinion on (title of item in CONSUMER REGISTER) _____

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Rate Register

● On March 9—& until June 14—Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) permitted American Airlines (AA) to provide night-coach excursion fares for 30% less than standard day coach fares. Previous fares for regular night-coach trips was 20% less. This new fare is 12½% below regular night coach levels. This fare applies to trips of 1,000 miles (1609 kilometers) or more. In addition, travelers must make reservations & buy tickets at least 7 days before trip & make stop-overs of 7 to 30 days before the return flight.

● American Telephone & Telegraph Co. (AT&T) has increased telephone rates for out-of-state calls. These rate changes are to increase revenue about 4.3% for long distance calls, & 4.4% each for Wide Area Telecommunications Service (WATS) & leased line services.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rejected AT&T's Jan. 3 filing for increased rates, which proposed to increase AT&T's revenue an average of 7.2%—or \$717 million—but said it would allow the company to file for a \$365 million increase. AT&T filed for the increase on March 7, & it went into effect March 9. [CONSUMER NEWS: Feb. 1]

● On Feb. 28—& until June 14—Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) permitted airlines to apply their excursion discount to trips as short as 750 miles (1207 kilometers) in length. These fares cost 25% less than normal coach fares for round trips lasting from 7 to 30 days. The discount will be 20% after mid-June until mid-September. Tickets must be bought at least a week before flight. Children under 12 get a 50% discount.

● On March 10, Trans-World Airlines (TWA) filed new coach fares with the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) that would give discounts of one-third for persons over 65, families & persons between 12 & 21 years old. If approved, the new fares would become effective April 24. Youth & over-65 fares would be for standby travel. Passengers would have to buy a \$5 identification card. Reduced fares would apply any day except certain peak holiday travel days. For the family plan, the head of a family would pay full fare, spouse would pay two-thirds of that fare & each child (12 to 21) would pay two-thirds of a full fare. The family plan would apply from April 24 through June 14 & resume Sept. 15.

